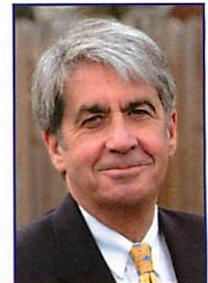


# Passing It On



By Thomas L. Cuni

**T**here seems to be a temptation, when discussing the state of professionalism in the legal profession, to refer to earlier, better years. I am not sure if the state of the profession is better or worse than when I began in 1975. I do believe that the work schedules for attorneys are far busier now than 30 years ago. It may be that we simply feel too busy to take the time to deal with each other on anything other

ners and engaged me in a civil discussion of the problem between our clients. I came away from that first encounter with John Muething with two very important lessons and one very painful conclusion. The first lesson was that his method of problem solving was more effective than mine. The second was that he let me see that it was our clients' dispute, not a dispute between attorneys. The painful conclusion was, when I thought about

In recognition of how busy we are, the program provides 12 hours of CLE credit for a mentor's participation. Would you rather sit in a classroom and listen to someone else talk, or would you prefer to have someone else learn from you? This program is a wonderful way to share what you have learned during your career.

The CBA recently hosted a reception for the mentors and mentees who have participated in the program. The mentors were the type of attorneys with whom you and I would wish to be associated. The mentees were young attorneys who clearly wanted to, and will, learn to be fine members of the profession.

In his remarks at the reception, Pat Fischer, a member of the Supreme Court of Ohio Commission on Professionalism, urged us to promote the program. I ask that you consider this program as something to include in your busy life. I think that in helping a new lawyer, you will find a new source of pride in your membership in our profession. 

*Cuni is 2009-10 president of the Cincinnati Bar Association.*

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## For more information about Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring:

Contact Maria Palermo, Assistant CBA Counsel, at [mcpalermo@cincybar.org](mailto:mcpalermo@cincybar.org)

Contact Lori Keating, Commission Secretary, at [keatingl@sconet.oh.us](mailto:keatingl@sconet.oh.us)

Visit [www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/mentoring/app](http://www.supremecourt.ohio.gov/AttySvcs/mentoring/app)

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than a strictly business basis. There is something lost if we do not take the time to learn a bit about other attorneys with whom we work or whom we oppose in our cases.

Some of the most valuable lessons in professionalism were taught to me by attorneys on the opposite sides of cases or in contentious transactions. One that I have mentioned often was a sweet, but embarrassing, lesson I learned from the late John L. Muething. When I first dealt with him on a contractual dispute between our clients, I was particularly rude and unfriendly. In a surprisingly gentle manner, he ignored my bad man-

the respective roles we had played in that little drama, I would much rather have played his role than mine.

In 2006 the Supreme Court of Ohio began Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring, designed to give new lawyers a chance to learn from experienced attorneys and perhaps avoid some of the mistakes I made. The statewide mentoring program which the Ohio Supreme Court, particularly Chief Justice Thomas Moyer, has promoted is a structured, well-designed program. Lawyer to Lawyer Mentoring is a yearlong commitment which requires nine hours of mentoring over the course of six in-person meetings.